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Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the sixth session (10-13 April 2007)

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Summary

The present report contains the conclusions and recommendations of the sixth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 13 April 2007. The Committee, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity for a four-year period. The Committee dealt with the following substantive items: (a) participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting; (b) compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration; (c) review of the activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance; and (d) public administration perspective on the theme of the annual ministerial review during the 2007 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development.

Based on the discussion of the above-mentioned topics, the Committee recommended to the Council a draft resolution for its consideration and adoption. The Committee also recommended that a policy brief outlining the recommendations on the main substantive theme be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the lead speakers and approved by the Committee Bureau. The policy brief would be a follow-up to the current and future sessions for consideration by the Member States.

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Chapter I

Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its sixth session and dates, venue and provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Committee

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2005/55 of 21 October 2005, in particular its reaffirmation of the need to deepen the participatory processes of government to ensure citizens' engagement to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and 2006/47 of 28 July 2006,

Concerned by the continuous marginalization of the poor and the disadvantaged in an era of a globalized world, which has led to decreasing trust in government by citizens,

Recognizing that the implementation of the United Nations development agenda and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals can be greatly facilitated if citizens are involved in participatory mechanisms pertaining to the planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and accountability of socio-economic development policies and programmes and that these mechanisms of participatory governance, help ensure efficiency and economic growth on the one hand and social justice on the other,

1. *Takes note* of the conclusions on this topic in the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its sixth session;[1]

2. *Encourages* Member States to reaffirm and deepen their use of participatory governance and citizen engagement in policy development, service delivery, and budgeting and public accountability with enabling mechanisms, including information and communications technology tools and other measures;

3. *Requests* the Secretariat to ensure that the normative, analytical and technical cooperation elements of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance continue to address participatory governance and to identify best practices;

4. *Notes* the work undertaken by the Committee on compiling and, where needed, conceptually defining basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration with a view to achieving more coherence in intergovernmental discussions;

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 24* (E/2007/44).

5. *Takes note* of the input by the Committee on the theme of the annual ministerial review to be held during the 2007 high-level segment of the Council and the proposals for themes for the same for 2008;

6. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue to expand the reach of the United Nations Public Service Awards on the United Nations Public Service Day as part of the effort to foster and disseminate excellence in public governance;

7. *Also requests* the Secretariat to expand the outreach of the portal of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance at the regional and subregional levels with its participating members as a one-stop shop in promoting information-sharing, knowledge management, and networking among public sector leaders around the world;

8. *Further requests* the Secretariat to continue its useful role as lead agency in facilitating the implementation of the action lines on e-governance-related issues contained in the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society;

9. *Welcomes* the holding of the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government in Vienna from 26 to 29 June 2007 and congratulates the Secretariat for its preparations, particularly the high quality of the programme;

10. *Encourages* Member States to participate in and support the marking of the sixtieth year of the work of the United Nations in the area of public administration and development;

11. *Approves* the convening of the seventh session of the Committee from 14 to 18 April of 2008;

12. *Also approves* the following agenda for the seventh session of the Committee:

1. Capacity-building for development, including post-conflict reconstruction of public administration and crisis/disaster management;
2. Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration;
3. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance;
4. Public administration perspective on the theme of the annual ministerial review of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Duration of the session

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its sixth session at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 13 April 2007.

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by 21 members of the Committee. Observers from organizations of the United Nations system and from intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

3. The session was attended by the following Committee members: Luis F. Aguilar Villanueva (Mexico), Ousmane Batoko (Benin), Marie-Françoise Bechtel (France), Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah (Morocco), Emilia T. Boncodin (Philippines), Jocelyne Bourgon (Canada), Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira (Brazil), Mario P. Chiti (Italy), Mikhail Dmitriev (Russian Federation), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Edgar Gonzalez Salas (Colombia), Werner Jann (Germany), Taher H. Kanaan (Jordan), Pan Suk Kim (Republic of Korea), Barbara Kudrycka (Poland), Florin Lupescu (Romania), Anthony Makrydemetres (Greece), José Oscar Monteiro (Mozambique), Siripurapu Kesava Rao (India), Prijono Tjiptoherijanto (Indonesia) and Gwendoline Anne Williams (Trinidad and Tobago).

4. The following members could not attend: Wang Xiaochu (China) and Peter Angyang'Nyong'o (Kenya). Dennis A. Rondinelli (United States of America) had recently passed away.

5. The list of observers who attended the session may be viewed on the United Nations Intranet (see http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan025877.pdf).

C. Agenda

6. The agenda of the Committee for its sixth session was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting.
4. Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration.
5. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

6. Public administration perspective on the theme of the annual ministerial review to take place during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 2007: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development.

7. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the seventh session of the Committee of Experts.

D. Election of officers

7. The following members are serving as the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur during the current session:

Chairperson:
Jocelyne **Bourgon** (Canada)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Geraldine J. **Fraser-Moleketi** (South Africa)
Taher H. **Kanaan** (Jordan)
Wang Xiaochu (China)

Rapporteur:
Luis F. Aguilar **Villanueva** (Mexico)

Chapter III
Summary of proceedings and conclusions

A. Work of the Committee

1. The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Jomo Kwame Sundaram, opened the session on 10 April 2007 on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo. Before introducing the main theme of the session, he announced that Ambassador Sha Zukang (China) would be replacing Mr. Ocampo as Under-Secretary-General in July 2007.

2. The Assistant Secretary-General highlighted that participatory governance was an emerging concept and practice in governance and public administration. The implementation of the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, required a governance system that was more engaging, transparent and accountable. Such an arrangement called for citizen participation in policy decision-making, service delivery and public accountability. However, a variety of institutions, structures and processes had evolved to accommodate greater participation by citizens, challenging the capacities of those institutions. He observed that many Governments recognized those challenges and were introducing measures to establish institutions and processes that addressed the challenges of participatory governance. He remarked that participatory governance arrangements could benefit and strengthen economic governance in general.

3. The Assistant Secretary-General also reminded the Committee of its guiding role for the Secretariat and the Economic and Social Council, in implementing United Nations activities in public administration and finance, particularly by reviewing the United Nations programme in that area. He also noted the important work that the Committee was undertaking in streamlining and standardizing basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration.

4. Tributes were made on behalf of the Committee and the Secretariat to Dennis Rondinelli (United States of America), a Committee member who had passed away recently. Another tribute to the late Joseph Galimberti, a former Executive Director of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada and a regular observer of previous Committee meetings, was made by a representative of the Institute.

5. The Committee unanimously adopted the agenda proposed for its sixth session.

B. Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting

6. The note by the Secretariat on participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting (E/C.16/2007/2) set the overall parameters for the Committee's debate and posed key questions for identifying policy options and recommendations for Member States, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat.

7. Citizen engagement is one of many mechanisms for ensuring the formulation and implementation of shared visions and goals that direct public resources and strategies to realize development goals. Participatory governance is one of many institutional strategies pertaining to planning, budgeting, monitoring and

accountability of development policies and programmes. Though effective participation helped ensure efficiency and economic growth on the one hand and social justice on the other, the precise conditions for these outcomes required further review. The value of civic engagement was recognized as much for its instrumental objectives as for its intrinsic ones.

8. The note suggested that, while government and market processes were important, neither could be entirely relied on to deliver basic services or developmental objectives, or to ensure public accountability in a transparent and accountable manner. Having dealt with the intricate aspects of pitfalls and specific innovations of effective participation, the note suggested that there were two different reasons for supporting it: the first was because it promotes equity and transparency by creating institutional arrangements that manage participation; the second was because it ensured that participation contributed to the respect of human rights. The note concluded by inviting the Committee to debate and provide insights and advice on a number of outstanding issues.

Policy development

9. The presenter noted that there was a need for clearer concepts and the realization that governance was different from the traditional democratic government and public management. The distinction was based on the different role of citizens, civil society structure and behaviour and the coordination of public-private interests. Participation was a fundamental goal with an intrinsic value, in addition to its instrumental or functional contribution to policy formulation, public service delivery and budgeting. Participation had a positive impact on policy formulation and implementation by enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, equity and social justice.

10. Participatory governance was different at the central, regional and local levels, and was particularly relevant at the local level. Several lessons learned were noted. Institutional arrangements changing the normative and cognitive foundations of the institutions needed to be introduced in order to make governance more inclusive and effective. Participation was linked to decentralization; as implemented to date, however, decentralization had shown many more cases of failure than success. In the future, specific modes of citizen participation should be identified according to the different phases of the policy cycle (agenda-setting, problem definition, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation). Participation had its own problems, such as the dominance of vested interest groups and traditional elites, and the difficulty of the lower levels of society in making their voices heard. To overcome such problems, future action at the level of civil society should be governed by the principles of capacity-building and social mobilization. At the levels of government and public administration, consultation and the principle of subsidiarity should guide future action.

11. The Secretariat made a number of observations. First, the United Nations development agenda had both a socio-economic side and a governance aspect, the latter aiding the realization of the former. Though the socio-economic side had been easily encapsulated, the governance aspect, which was of equal importance, was more complex. Second, citizen engagement and participatory governance were means of deepening democracy and of overcoming the challenges that modern governance had engendered. Third, one set of prerequisites to ensure that

participatory governance and citizens engagement were sustainable included political commitment and empowering the citizenry to actively contribute to policy development. The other set included the rule of law, an independent judiciary, free media and the protection of citizens, who had the right to be heard. Lastly, the risks involved with participatory governance should not be underestimated. Elite capture, graft and rent-seeking activities were some of the risks attached to certain forms of participatory governance, including decentralization.

12. The Committee observed that the context for participation — where, when and under which conditions — was very important. Countries differed in terms of political economy, political systems, development level, the educational standard of their citizens and leadership types in government. They may also be emerging from a conflict, disaster or crisis. Moreover, civic engagement should not be treated as a substitute for or parallel to established processes of government. It could be a means of revitalizing the formal institutions of democracy. Participatory governance could be regarded as a means to improve the relationship of trust and confidence between citizens and democratic institutions. It was noted that there had been a widening gap between citizens' expectations and the performance of democratic institutions.

13. In this context, three topics emerged during the Committee's discussion: the concept of participatory governance; its prerequisites; and its risks or unintended consequences. The concept of participation in public affairs and in public policy was a right of citizens. It was not an antithetical substitute of representative democratic government action nor of the classical model of public administration, but an additional way of creating public goods or solving public problems, resting on the involvement and shared responsibility of citizens in public-policy development. A minimal or core component of participatory governance was giving citizens the opportunity to have a voice in the policies that would affect them most.

14. The prerequisites for success of citizen participation included the rule of law, freedom of speech, protection of participants, political will and leadership. Care should also be taken to minimize discrediting the concept of participatory governance, or allowing it to be considered just a "fad".

15. Even if properly implemented, participatory governance could still run the risk of being captured by vested interest groups, traditional elites or power groups, or co-opted by those in power. A pragmatic and incremental approach rather than an overly optimistic or pessimistic one was suggested to Member States.

16. The Committee agreed with an overall proposition, according to which public policies were more effective and efficient in democratic societies when (a) their definition was the result of consultation and participation with engaged citizens; (b) their implementation was the responsibility to citizens and relevant organizations of civil society. In sum, participatory governance was a sharing of public responsibilities among the State, the market and citizens: a nexus of key stakeholders.

Service delivery

17. The presenter noted that government and business organizations were experiencing a fundamental restructuring in the way they went about business. Quality management and continuous improvement were the new imperatives for corporate and public management, which must also be transparent, innovative and

participatory. Relying exclusively on Governments to deliver basic services had proven to be unsatisfactory; therefore, Governments had been exploring alternative service delivery options, including partnering, shared-service delivery, subcontracting and outsourcing.

18. Information and communications technology was proving to be one means of contributing to innovation, efficiency and quality in service delivery. The presenter argued that introducing participation in early stages of the service-delivery process yielded better service design. For example, in the planning stages, citizens could be consulted regarding their preferences. The presenter observed that modern information and communications technology offered opportunities for the engagement of citizens. The technology itself was merely an enabler; the key to the innovation that it allowed in business models was the innovative spirit.

19. Increasing demand for services and a limited supply of resources caused deficits in the delivery of services. Such deficits could lower the quality of service delivery and even cause conflict. Safeguards to ensure the delivery of expected results included enabling arrangements that were (a) normative (a law to allow sustainable participation); (b) regulatory (rules/regulations to guide and encourage participation); and (c) regenerative (capacity-building of government, non-governmental organizations and citizens).

20. The Secretariat noted that it was important to understand what constituted service delivery and who the providers were. At its core, service delivery was about products that were essential to citizens to maintain healthy, productive lives with free choices. Efficient and effective delivery of services was based on affordability, accessibility, quality and quantity. This presupposed a shared vision of responsibilities, rights and equal access for all stakeholders, especially civil society organizations, in all aspects of service delivery.

21. The Committee observed that social justice and the economic aspects of public service delivery were just as important as the political or technological ones, because mass public service delivery was an expensive undertaking. Therefore, cost-benefit analysis should become an essential element of delivery process. It also observed that participatory governance implied a dispersal of power. Participatory governance was about giving voice to citizens, not the State giving away legal decision-making power. Giving the power of voice could help to make more enlightened, respected and eventually, better decisions.

22. Measures for strengthening the voice of citizens included (a) public reporting of results and impact measures; (b) the introduction of dispute-resolution mechanisms and other participatory procedures for grievances; and (c) the adoption of information and communications technology solutions to reach out to citizens and bring them closer to government.

23. Participation was transforming the relationship between Government and citizens. For public servants, this meant a new set of skills, such as learning to listen to citizens, moderating groups and managing multiple stakeholders. The Committee concluded that citizen engagement was not an issue for all policy areas but about ensuring that citizens had a voice.

24. Civic and formal education, particularly higher education, and the media need to inculcate the values of participation and engagement. Better communication of these values with citizens was needed. Participation could become more relevant for

citizens when it created an interface between non-binding inputs into formal, binding decision-making. Partnerships were a necessary modality in an environment of shared responsibilities in producing public goods. However, a cost-benefit analysis needed to be undertaken in the engagement of citizens in service delivery. A taxonomy of the various forms and modalities of citizens' and civil society's engagement in each type of service delivery might help to focus such an analysis better. In this regard, the potential of modern information and communications technology was under-exploited.

Budgeting and public accountability

25. The presenter described the context of citizen engagement in budgeting, public accountability and defined key concepts. After noting the strengths and limitations of prevailing practices in the budgeting process and public accountability, the presenter explored the reasons why citizen engagement was important. Citizen engagement was likely to (a) demystify budgeting; (b) respond to citizens' basic needs; (c) improve budget allocation; (d) prevent financial corruption; and (e) enhance accountability.

26. Further, citizen engagement provided feedback from beneficiaries on actual results, expanded coverage of audits, better informed citizens of agency performance, protected the benefits of those who were intimidated by formal accountability processes and helped deter corruption in oversight and audit bodies. Modalities of citizen engagement were then discussed and a number of cases were presented.

27. The presenter observed that citizen engagement in budgeting and public accountability was a relatively recent phenomenon. Despite numerous success stories of citizen engagement in initiatives, government agencies were still hesitant to share budgeting and auditing responsibilities with citizens. The benefits of citizen engagement included demand-driven budget prioritization, greater citizen ownership, an improvement in the quality of review and accountability, a greater sensitivity of government officials to public needs and a reduction in corruption. There were also drawbacks, such as a lack of understanding by civil society of the legal and structural components of the budget, destructive competition among civil society organizations, and the risk that those organizations sought compromise with government due to their dependency on it.

28. The presentation was followed by active deliberations among the participants, who agreed upon a number of points. The most successful examples of participatory budgeting had been seen at the local level. In particular, "people budgeting" could be best carried out at the local level, where all major interests affected by public spending could be balanced in a transparent way. At the local level, binding procedures could be implemented, while at the national level, participatory budgeting should follow the mechanisms of representative democracy, ensuring transparency and accountability. Others pointed out that the structure of the budget was a key factor that could either facilitate or prevent citizen participation. For example, a results-based budget which emphasized the social impact of programmes and spending allowed monitoring of results that in itself was an incentive for citizen engagement. However, the involvement of citizens in the accountability process was only possible at the national level with enabling rather than prescriptive legislation.

29. The Committee also noted the statement by the representative of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions that, at the country level, supreme audit institutions had resolved to strengthen the confidence of their parliaments, Governments, citizens and civil society in the independence, objectivity, quality and cost-effectiveness of their audit reporting, thereby contributing to their country's stability and economic growth, good governance and fight against corruption.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

30. The Committee encouraged Member States to reaffirm and deepen participatory governance and citizen engagement and instigate the necessary capacity-building initiatives. In addition, the Committee noted the need to continue to include the cross-cutting issues of governance and public administration, and particularly participatory governance, in its agenda on the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

31. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the normative, analytical and technical cooperation elements of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance continued to include participatory governance and citizen engagement in policy development, service delivery and public accountability. The discussions on participatory governance should be incorporated in the next *World Public Sector Report* on the theme. It advised the Secretariat to strengthen its partnership with other international and regional organizations, particularly civil society groups, in carrying out its work on participatory governance.

32. In addition, the Committee felt that a policy brief on the subject would be a useful instrument and reference document. The document should be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the lead speakers and circulated. It would contribute to the deliberations of the Committee at the next session on capacity-building. The main topics of discussion during future sessions could also be usefully reflected in recurrent policy briefs for the attention of Member States. The policy briefs should be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the lead speakers and approved by the Committee Bureau. Moreover, the creation of additional outputs of the Committee sessions, such as a "blog" or in-depth articles, could reflect the views and contributions of individual members.

C. Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration

33. The Chair of the Committee Working Group on basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration submitted a preliminary report (E/C.16/2007/4) on the activities of the Working Group established to prepare a "compendium" or "glossary". The objective of the glossary was to improve the clarity of the intergovernmental deliberations of the United Nations and to assist Member States to better implement relevant United Nations resolutions.

34. No such glossary currently existed at the domestic, regional or international level. Despite several attempts, no group had succeeded in producing one, including the European Union. The glossary would serve the interests of both the Member

States and the United Nations. United Nations decisions and resolutions did not include in their preamble a glossary, unlike those of some countries or the European Union. In addition, many terms in United Nations documents were used with different meanings, resulting in a high degree of conceptual uncertainty. In the absence of an accepted common terminology, each Member State was free to interpret United Nations decisions according to its own general principles or its "administrative culture". Such a glossary would therefore (a) ensure clearer discussions on governance and public administration and more consistent follow-up actions; (b) promote more uniform implementation of decisions and resolutions; and (c) contribute to a better global understanding of the concepts of governance and public administration.

35. The Chair argued that, while attempts made by other institutions at such a glossary had been mostly of a linguistic or technical character, the initiative by the Committee had a conceptual approach. The Chair presented the following three models: model A, featuring a shortened definition, links to other terms and a concise body of reference materials; model B, with a more detailed definition, including parts of model A enriched with appropriate references for in-depth analysis; and model C, with only a concise file, as in model A, augmented by reference materials posted on the website of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

36. The list of terms contained in the annex to the report was a first attempt. The glossary could start with the definition of terms mostly used in (a) United Nations documents and (b) in the international arena. To be practical, the Chair suggested that the first draft of the glossary be in English. The glossary could be an official United Nations document and "open", as it was a work in progress, subject to periodical revisions, enlargements and permanent review of its contents. The work would be carried out by the members of the Committee with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and with linkages to other institutions working in similar areas.

37. The presentation was followed by commentaries by the Chief of the Terminology and Reference Section, Document Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat, also representing the International Annual Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology. He stated that the United Nations had a database of terminologies used by translators and interpreters. The Terminology Section could provide assistance to the Committee by incorporating the glossary into its database, which was freely accessible to the public in the six official languages. He mentioned that the Annual Meeting could post the glossary on its website. However, he suggested that the Committee start with the current list and postpone its participation in the Annual Meeting.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

38. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Chair and the members of the Working Group for its work. It also welcomed the support of the Terminology and Reference Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, stating that the glossary was a very important initiative which would remain the legacy of the Committee; at the same time, it was an exercise that would require resources and the input of many scholars. One way of addressing the issue of resources was by having the Committee members share responsibility by

providing conceptual clarification that would allow the public administration community to better understand the terms. The Committee encouraged the use of existing resources, including the Terminology and Reference Section. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs would assign staff to provide support to the Working Group.

39. Though some stated a preference for model A, the challenge of producing such a glossary made it important to start small and build on success. The task should be continuous, and the glossary should proceed gradually from the most widely used terms, contested or accepted by all. While acknowledging the diversity, it was also important to keep a certain degree of homogeneity and use the glossary as a bridge between cultures.

40. As the glossary was not a mere dictionary but a sum of ideas, it could also be used to develop new concepts and new terminology in the area of governance and public administration. In some cultures or languages, two terms could mean the same thing, whereas one term could mean two different things in another. It was therefore important that the glossary use related terms, such as "policy" and "politics" or "government" and "governance", so that the similarities and differences between the terms were highlighted. In addition, certain terms such as "accountability", which was not included in the current list, should be added, while terms that were controversial and political in nature could be avoided at the initial stage.

41. While English should be used at the start, concepts as understood in other languages could be developed and eventually even enrich the English language itself. The Committee welcomed the initial translation of the glossary to the other five United Nations languages, with the option of translating it into as many languages as possible at a later stage. For the purpose of cross-fertilization, it would be important to include concepts that did not just originate from the Anglo-Saxon culture, but also from African and Asian concepts and from the French language.

42. Finally, the Committee agreed that the Working Group should (a) continue its work; (b) collaborate with the Terminology and Reference Section and other external bodies, such as the International Institute of Administrative Sciences and other offices of the United Nations that are involved in similar work and those that were in a position to provide support to the Working Group, such as the International Annual Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology; (c) select model C, which combined the advantage of simplicity with additional reference materials; and (d) be pragmatic and start small. If each Committee member elaborated three or four terms, quite a number of terms could be ready for review and decision by the next session of the Committee. The present task could be completed even before the mandate of the Committee expired in 2009.

D. Review of the activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

43. The Secretariat submitted a note (E/C.16/2007/5) highlighting the activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. The four major functional areas of the Secretariat in the domain of public administration described were advocacy, analysis and research, exchange of experiences and dissemination of good practices, and technical cooperation. The note elaborated on

specific activities, including those in the areas of innovations in public administration, post-conflict reconstruction of public administration systems, participatory governance and information communications technology for development. It also highlighted some important joint initiatives undertaken in cooperation with various partners in 2006. A special mention was made by the Secretariat of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance in 2008. The strategic framework proposed for the biennium 2008-2009 outlining the activities to be implemented and containing the relevant indicators of achievement for measuring the progress achieved was also presented.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

44. The Committee welcomed the note and commended the Secretariat for the work carried out and progress achieved in the previous year. It also reviewed the strategic framework, including the activities envisaged in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to better focus its work programme. The Committee recommended that the characteristics of democratic governance be more accentuated in the work of the Division. The main recommendations of the Committee are presented below.

45. Notwithstanding the noticeably strengthened cooperation between the Secretariat and other departments and organizations, particularly the members of the Governance and Institution-Building Cluster of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Secretariat was encouraged to more actively pursue cooperation with potential partners at the regional and subregional levels. In that regard, the members of the Committee would gladly facilitate such cooperation in their respective regions.

46. The Committee observed that after the Secretariat focused its work on four substantive areas — post-conflict reconstruction of governance and public administration systems; participatory governance; promotion of professionalism and ethics in the public sector; and information and communications technology for development — the quality of output had improved. The demand for publications and training materials had dramatically increased. However, the unavailability of information in other languages took away from their usefulness. The Secretariat was encouraged to look for possibilities to translate available materials into other languages of the United Nations. In addition, when possible, the Secretariat should produce summaries of its publications in plain language.

47. The Committee suggested that certain aspects of disaster management related to the field of public administration, including disaster preparedness, response and recovery, be addressed in the future by the Programme.

48. The Committee took note of the positive evaluation contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-fourth session on the in-depth evaluation of the programme on public administration, finance and development (E/AC.51/2007/3).

49. While emphasizing the comparative advantage of the Secretariat in performing normative activities, the Committee also highlighted the need for keeping a balance

between advocacy, analytical and research work and technical cooperation activities carried out by the Division.

50. While acknowledging the critical role that technical cooperation activities for the capacity-building of government officials and institutions played, the Committee also underscored the importance of nurturing close cooperation with other United Nations agencies represented in the field and undertaking measures to increase the impact and recognition of the Division at the national and subnational levels.

51. The Committee strongly encouraged the Secretariat to increase the membership of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN), continuously develop its content and undertake its technical system upgrade, particularly in the light of the increasingly important role played by the network and its portal as a hub of the global network of public administration organizations. In this regard, the Committee would like to request the Secretariat to earmark additional funding for UNPAN.

52. As in the past, the Committee expressed its appreciation for the commemoration of 23 June as United Nations Public Service Day and issuance of the United Nations Public Service Awards. The Committee encouraged the wide dissemination of information on the awards, including at the regional and subnational levels.

53. The Committee took note that 2008 would be the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance and suggested that the recognition of that milestone be given in the context of celebrations to be held on 23 June of that year.

E. Public administration perspective on the theme of the 2007 annual ministerial review during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development

54. The Secretariat presented a conference room paper on public administration and the 2007 annual ministerial review of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development. The paper highlighted the components of good governance and public administration, which were most critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The components included a coherent framework for pro-poor policies; efficient, effective and ethical civil service and public sector personnel; decentralized management and strong capacity for service delivery; transparency and accountability for public resource allocation and use; upholding the rule of law; the protection of human rights; and the involvement of civil society and aid coordination. In the paper, it was noted that a main obstacle to halving the proportion of people who lived on less than $1 a day and those who suffered from hunger by 2015 were competing demands, which far outstripped existing public resources. Therefore, difficult political and technical choices had to be made by a country and its leaders, involving decisions about exercising power and allocating resources.

55. The Secretariat presented background information on the reforms of the Council and reported on a meeting of the Council Bureau and the chairs of

functional commissions, held in January 2007. The purpose of that meeting was to ensure better communication and coordination between and among the Bureau and the functional commissions.

56. The Secretariat also briefed the Committee on the progress made in eradicating poverty and hunger since 1990, namely Goal 1 of the eight Millennium Development Goals. According to the Millennium Development Goals report 2006,[2] the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty in the developing world (on less than $1 per day) declined from 28 per cent in 1990 to 19 per cent in 2002. People living in chronic hunger (lacking food to meet daily needs) dropped from 20 per cent in 1990/2 to 17 per cent in 2001/3. However, progress had been slow and uneven among different regions. To halve the number of people in extreme poverty or suffering from chronic hunger by 2015, interventions had to be increased. The presentation posed three questions to the Committee: (a) what interventions in governance and public administration should be made by Member States in the remaining eight years?; (b) should governance and public administration be discussed in the 2008 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council?; and (c) if so, what theme should be proposed?

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

57. As regards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Committee noted that Member States had already made interventions on many levels. They included (a) international financial and trade policies for economic growth; (b) national-level redistributive policies for social objectives; (c) mobilizing and deploying resources for implementing new programmes and stepping up existing ones; and (d) making governance and public administration more responsive, efficient and effective in implementing poverty alleviation initiatives. In the time left, it would be helpful to focus on how to strengthen the capacities of individual countries rather than on failures. In addition, the introduction of regional initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, could also assist.

58. Regarding the above matter, the Committee members highlighted the importance of (a) effective rule of law and a legal framework that encouraged productivity, entrepreneurship and competitive markets and that sanctioned rent-seeking, monopolies and speculative risk-taking; (b) efficient public institutions and processes that provided predictability of results; (c) building a leadership capacity for creating consensus on a common agenda; and (d) public servants with a minimum level of professionalism that prevented delays in the implementation of key policies and programmes. The complexity of dealing with corruption, or perceived corruption, in key areas for economic growth, such as taxation, customs, procurement and contracting, was also raised.

59. Given the cross-cutting nature of governance and public administration, the Committee expressed the view that key aspects should be brought to the notice of the Council. For the high-level segment in 2007, the Committee felt that a 1-page overview of the present discussion could be presented at the annual ministerial review. For 2008, the Committee expressed a strong interest in presenting a

[2] For online text, see: http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2006/MDGReport2006.pdf.

governance and public administration perspective at an appropriate component of the annual ministerial review.

F. Preparatory session for the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government

60. A presentation on the Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, the largest international event in public administration supported by the Secretariat as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/277, was made to the Committee by the Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria. The theme of the Forum was "Building trust in government", which is a critical issue emerging around the world. The seven topics of the plenary session of the Forum were the key components to improving public administration and governance to promote trust in government. The Forum was the global platform for the exchange of international experiences and strategies to improve governance, which was a requirement to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Comments and conclusions of the Committee

61. The Committee noted with enthusiasm that over 2,000 participants, including Heads of State and Government, ministers, senior government officials, mayors, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the private sector were expected to participate in the Forum. The Committee was pleased to learn that seven regional forums had been organized to prepare for the Forum, which would permit various regions to bring their specific perspectives to the discussions in the Forum and the related outcome document. The Committee appreciated the preparation of technical documents by the Secretariat for the Forum and its leadership in forging partnerships with over 25 entities and institutions inside and outside the United Nations system to organize seven parallel capacity-development workshops.

G. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the next session of the Committee of Experts and preliminary review of the draft report of the Committee

62. The Committee discussed the main issues for consideration under the main substantive item of the seventh session. As regards the main topic and sub-topics on capacity-building, the Committee agreed that the Secretariat would circulate to the members an outline by the end of July 2007. The Committee members would be called upon to prepare papers on the various sub-topics for circulation in October.

63. The Committee also reviewed its methods of work, including the possibility of breaking discussions up into thematic groups. In view of the close relationship between the main agenda item for 2007 and the situations in developing countries, the Committee asked the Secretariat to explore the possibility of holding the seventh session in a developing country or a country emerging from conflict, crisis or disaster.

64. The Committee strongly suggested that due visibility be given to the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance by organizing substantive events during the next sessions of the Committee, the

Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as on the United Nations Public Service Day.

65. Finally, the Committee undertook to prepare a substantive resolution on good governance and capacity-building in support of the United Nations development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals, drawing from the work of the Committee meetings held since 1995.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.16/2007/1	2	Provisional agenda and organization of work
E/C.16/2007/2	3	Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting
E/C.16/2007/4	4	Compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration
E/C.16/2007/5	5	Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance
Conference room paper	6	Public administration perspective on the theme of the 2007 annual ministerial review during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development.

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E/C.16/2007/6